

Next issue
in 2 weeks:
Sat., Sept. 13

The Main Street WIRE™

28th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



Kathie Grimm 937 votes Paterson appointment Confirmed by Senate
Jonathan Kalkin 933 votes Paterson appointment Confirmed by Senate
Fay Christian 803 votes Paterson appointment Confirmed by Senate
Howard Polivy 750 votes Bloomberg appointment Senate confirmation pending
David Kraut Did not run Reappointed by Governor Confirmed by Senate
Patrick Stewart Did not run Reappointed by Mayor Senate confirmation pending
Charlee Miller Term continues Pataki appointee

Four of the community's six nominees in the February election have received appointments; two others (see bottom of page) were passed over to retain Stewart and Kraut.

Community's Nomination Process Brings Changes in the RIOC Board, Though Not the Sweep Sought by Proponents

Future of Steam Plant Appears Sealed – And There's No Steam in It

by Dick Lutz

A professional study of Roosevelt Island's energy situation calculates that the Island could reduce pollution and improve the Steam Plant's efficiency substantially through a \$5.1 million upgrade. The project would involve a conversion from polluting #6 fuel oil to cleaner natural gas. It would reduce the cost of steam by 26%, paying back the capital investment within three years. Thereafter, the annual savings would be \$1.3 million, according to the study.

But it may be an idea whose time has passed. That is the view, at least, of RIOC President Steve Shane, who feels the study "settles, for all time, whether the Steam Plant is an asset or a liability." The answer, as he sees it, is *liability* or, at least, certainly not an asset. RIOC's resident engineer, Tom Turcic, agrees.

But a resident who has advocated integration of the Steam Plant into the overall energy future

See **Steam Plant**, page 6



These friends scored matching bike helmets recently when the Public Safety Department passed them out, free, in Good Shepherd Plaza. In the background, two of the planners of the event – RIOC President Steve Shane and PSD Director Keith Guerra.

Photo: Paul Katz

Two Elected Nominees Left Out, Kraut and Stewart Reappointed

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has made his choices for the RIOC Board of Directors. They are Howard Polivy, one of the six winners in the community's February 5 contest for nominations to the Board, and Patrick Stewart, a longtime member of the Board who sat out the election.

The decision leaves two of the community's nominees without appointments to the Board: Frank Farance and Erin Feely-Nahem, the third- and fourth-highest vote-getters among the six winners.

The Roosevelt Island Residents Association (RIRA) ran the community election, with financial support from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), after RIOC President Steve Shane suggested during his confirmation process that he favored election of Board members. Then-Governor Eliot Spitzer had given Shane a go-ahead for such a process, though there was never a firm guarantee that all, or any, of the community's choices would receive appointments.



RIRA President Matthew Katz comments on the outcome of the election-appointment process in his column in this issue (page 3), as does Farance in a letter on page 2.

Polivy's appointment has not yet been confirmed by the New York State Senate. That means that sitting Board member Michael Shinozaki will continue to serve until that confirmation has been accomplished. That could take until early 2009, unless the Senate meets in a special session in which incidental matters, like appointments to State boards and commissions, are handled.

Once Polivy is confirmed, there will be four elected residents on the Board – Kathie Grimm, Jonathan Kalkin, Faye Christian, and Polivy – and three residents appointed by the Governor or the Mayor – Charlee Miller, David Kraut, and Patrick Stewart. Miller was appointed by then-Governor George Pataki, and her term continues. Kraut, an appointee of then-Governor Mario Cuomo, was reappointed by Governor Paterson and confirmed by the Senate. Stewart, also a Pataki appointee nominated by then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, was renominated by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Stewart's confirmation, like Polivy's, is pending. Under the law establishing RIOC, he continues to serve until replaced (or reappointed and confirmed), so he remains on the Board.

Two additional voting members of the RIOC Board are the Commissioner of the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Deborah van Amerongen, and a representative of the state budget office, who varies from time to time.

The RIOC Board next meets on September 11 at 4:30 p.m.



Islanders Going to D.C.? He'll Drive ...and He'll Go 135 MPH

by Dick Lutz

Ike Nahem is living the dream of every 1950s four-year-old who was blown away by the sight of a locomotive and the notion of mastering such power. Even today, many of those four-year-olds, grown into their fifties, are railroad buffs, drawn by the romance of steel wheels on steel rails charging across America in service of passengers or freight.

But railroading today – even driving the engine of a high-speed Acela from New York to Washington, as Nahem does four days a week – has little in common

See **Nahem**, page 10

Briefly...

- Public Safety has scheduled a **Youth Summit** for Wednesday, September 10, at 6:30 p.m., in the cafeteria at PS/IS 217, for young people and their parents.
- Assemblymember Micah Kellner** has launched a blog (short for web-log, a kind of running internet diary) at MicahKellner.net. It's one route to a dialogue. His community office is at 315 East 65th, but he holds office hours on Roosevelt Island Thursdays, 3:00-7:00 p.m., at 591 Main Street (RIOC).
- City Councilmember Jessica Lappin** is having a campaign fundraiser barbecue Wednesday, September 10, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at Lighthouse Park. (See *ComingUp*, page 3.)
- The September 13 *WIRE* will mark the start of this publication's 29th year.



Alberteen Anderson Did not run Pataki appointee Replaced
Mark Ponton Did not run Pataki appointee Replaced
Michael Shinozaki Did not run Bloomberg appointee Not reappointed; term continues until Polivy is confirmed by Senate
Frank Farance 911 votes No appointment
Erin Feely-Nahem 832 votes No appointment
The third and fourth highest vote-getters in February were passed over by both the Governor and Mayor.

The Editorial Page

A Year Without the Tram

Spending \$25M+ on a Failure of Responsibility

Roosevelt Island is about to spend \$25 million or more on a Tramway upgrade largely because one official could not stand up and say, “My fault.”

On April 18, 2006, equipment that was working as designed triggered a routine stop on the 5:15 p.m. trip, leaving two cabins and their evening-rush passengers hanging. Shortly thereafter, a rookie Tramway employee, inadequately trained for such an ordinary occurrence, was unable to execute a standard restart procedure. His incompetence (he was later fired) was exacerbated by the arrival of NYC emergency personnel – most notably NYPD but also including FDNY units – who were all too willing to undertake some heroic rescue activity in view of helicopter-borne television cameras. Their eagerness was compounded by the interdepartmental rivalry in which NYPD didn’t want to be upstaged by FDNY. The rescue effort was summarily removed from the hands of experienced Tramway personnel who had arrived and who were ready to resolve the situation without outside help.

It was later revealed that equipment that should have reeled in the two cabins failed because it had not been maintained and fully tested on a regular basis. (Procedures have since been tightened.) At the time, the closest observers of the Tram – those who run it day by day – had often complained that Red Blomer, the Dopplmayr employee in overall charge here, was rarely present. A subcontractor had failed to supervise adequately, and RIOC had apparently accepted that without complaint.

This was, in short, a failure of the RIOC administration of Herbert E. Berman, a political appointee of Governor George Pataki. He had inherited a deficient system – *human factors*, not mechanical or electrical ones – from previous Pataki appointees.

The buck should have stopped then and there. Berman should have stood up and issued a statement something like this:

We failed to administer and supervise. We allowed eager city rescue workers to take over prematurely. We panicked under pressure and discarded tested procedures. The Tram is sound, and it will be back in service in a few days at most. We screwed up. Sorry. We will do better in the future.

But there was no such statement. There was no immediate follow-up to repair the chain of command. The Tram was taken out of service for over four months. Fingers were pointed in error. ConEd, for example, mounted a credible defense. Scrambling to find a scapegoat, the Berman administration turned to the one component that could not defend itself.

They blamed the Tram.

The *equipment* became the scapegoat. Like RIOC presidents before him, Berman had been more interested in building things than in taking care of the things that we already had. For a bureaucrat, it’s nice to be able to say, “I built that.” There is not as much glamour in being able to say, “I took care of what was already there.”

Once the blame was fully misdirected to the equipment, that was rationalized: *It’s 30 years old* was the blanket that obscured all else. But age had virtually nothing to do with the Tram’s failure that day. The failure was in components whose maintenance and testing had been slipshod. Put that down to human factors and failed supervision. Hardware can fail, even backup hardware. But that night’s hardware failures, as they mounted, clearly had their root in human failures, most notably laxness in maintenance and testing.

A further failure, specific to 4/18/06, was in dropping the matter into the hands of city emergency personnel without sticking to tested rescue protocols. It has been said, and we believe it, that if Tramway workers had remained in charge, passengers would have been on the ground within an hour – or two at most.

Blaming the equipment meant that when it was time to ask *How do we fix this?*, the focus became the Tram – not training, maintenance, administration, and learning from a bungled experience.

Then, more heroics: The Governor stepped in with a promise of \$15 million. An impressive sum, but a classic example of throwing millions at a mess that could be fixed for thousands.

That puts us where we are today – about to spend \$15 million of New York State taxpayers’ money, plus \$10 million in Roosevelt Island money, on a complexifying “upgrade,” and about to suffer a year without Tram service when we already have rush-hour delays and inconvenience because, as we add more residents in new buildings, there is no morning-rush room on one F train after another.

Under Steve Shane, procedures are better. Supervision has been tightened. Most of the potential for human-factor failure has been wrung out of the system.

Once we debunk the scapegoating of the equipment, the remaining reasons for why we’re going to go through this boil down to these:

1. We’ve got the state’s \$15 million to spend. We’d hate to lose it, and we can afford to add \$10 million.
2. We’ll get a marginal increase in the availability of Tram service by converting to a separated system where work can be done on side A while side B carries passengers. (As Steve Shane notes in a rebuttal on page 12, this was a primary attraction for him.)

To reason #1, we say there are many ways we can use \$10 million or \$25 million-plus, and we doubt very much that would be the end of it. To reason #2, we note that a year out of service to buy something new for the next 30 years means that we’re gaining a system with a promised downtime of 1% at the expense of 3% downtime – that is, a probable year or more out of the next 30 – of downtime. **We think that’s a bad trade.**

Further excuses focus on parts that may become unavailable at some point in the future, and on fears that certain rare parts could fail unexpectedly, leaving us without the Tram for what is claimed to be weeks or months. But the really critical parts can be fabricated in advance. An example is the reduction gearbox that transmits power from the Tram’s motor to its haul cables. Why not order a spare? Why not install that spare when it arrives, and have the old one remanufactured to be like new? And if that’s not possible, why not order an additional standby?

The electrical system has already been upgraded, and future upgrades will be possible. New track cables are needed, but their periodic replacement is routine, though costly, and it doesn’t take the year that we expect the upgrade will take. (Those in charge say it should be less than a year. That would be nice, but predicting such things isn’t an exact science, and we think the hoped-for 8 months could stretch to 18.)

We also believe that track cables will have to be replaced more frequently in the new system because of a change in the tensioning system. That’s a downtime in availability, even with a second side running, because one cabin can’t keep the rush-hour pace of two. And track

See **Editorial**, page 12

Letters

To RIOC Board members,

In the August 2 issue of *The WIRE*, the interview with Mark Ponton made it clear that there are very serious questions as to the need for, and safety of, the planned Tram overhaul. If, upon investigation, his contentions prove to be true, the planned overhaul should be stopped. As a result, as Board members, it is your responsibility and obligation to:

- 1) Immediately order a suspension of work on the planned overhaul.
- 2) Appoint a committee of the Board to examine Mr. Ponton’s data to determine whether the overhaul as planned should continue, or be abandoned and replaced by the much more modest tweaks that Mr. Ponton’s information indicates are necessary.

In fact, the situation is serious enough that it should not be put off until the next planned RIOC Board meeting on September 11, but an immediate Board meeting should be called to address this issue. Remember, it takes only three Board members to call a meeting.

As Board members, it is your responsibility to the welfare and safety of the community not to ignore this issue and to act immediately.

Lee Edelman

To the Editor:

Realizing it comes as heresy to most long-time Island residents, I would like to go on record indicating my support for a condo development on the south site of the hospital complex. The land we have here is undoubtedly the single best plot of land in all of New York City, and maybe in any big city in the U.S. – or even the world. It is a stunning site and I for one would absolutely *love* to live there. If someone announced a pre-build program, I would be the first in line to put down a down-payment!

Am I the only one on this Island who thinks that it doesn’t actually belong to a select few who want to remain in a privileged outdated state? Why should it be that Roosevelt Island is any less subject to the normal vagaries of development? It seems as if everyone feels that they have some right to this Island that should be denied to newcomers.

I want SSJ Development, the people working on the ferry service, and anyone else who is trying to move this incredibly beautiful place into the 21st century to know that they have my support.

Denise Shull

To Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg:

Roosevelt Island elected six nominees for the RIOC Board of Directors, and both the Governor and Mayor failed to recognize the wishes of the residents of Roosevelt Island – *their wishes voiced via the ballot box for the top six candidates, and their wishes via prior referenda with 92% of the residents demanding an elected Board of Directors for RIOC*. This broken appointment process is disappointing to all Roosevelt Island residents.

It is worth asking: *Why do we have such an appointment process for RIOC Board Members?* I grew up in Freeport, Long Island, an incorporated village where the voters elected the trustees (board) of the corporation, the mayor, and the local Board of Education’s trustees. Likewise, public corporations elect directors via shareholder votes. If the plain election of directors works elsewhere in government, and works in private industry, then we residents need a clear and honest explanation as to why this direct election approach is unacceptable for Roosevelt Island. *What makes Roosevelt Island so different that the universal common rules of election and democracy don’t apply?*

It is worth asking: *Why were some candidates chosen over others?* Without an honest explanation from the Governor’s and Mayor’s offices, we residents are left to give our own explanations. Considering that Erin Feely-
See Letters, page 13

Letters deadline for Sept. 13 issue: Tuesday, Sept. 9. After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters of local interest to the community, and to/from officials. Requests for *Name Withheld* publication will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records; *letters submitted anonymously will not be published*. Recommended method of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com or submit on a CD left at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. If you e-mail, *expect a confirming response* and, if you don’t receive one, *resend* and call 212-826-9055 to alert us that it’s been sent. Alternatives: Typed copy left at 531 Main Street; allow extra time for typesetting. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered, if brief. We are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters subject to acceptance and editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 350 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.


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COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Open Swim Hours, 6am-9pm daily, for all ages, Sportspark. Adults \$5, children \$3, seniors & infants, free.

– The Coming Week –

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed Sept 3**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, former Islander *Kristin Seely* (smooth jazz) with Bill Heller (Rippingtons) and Adam Seely (Beginnings), **Fri Sep 5**, 6-10pm.

Registration for fall classes at **Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, **Sat Sep 6** and **Sat Sep 13**, 11-3, at the Howe Theatre, 548 Main St. (entrance behind the video store). Classes start Sep 15. Information **212-371-4449**.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, *Sherry Wagner* (classic jazz), **Sat Sep 6**, 6-10pm.

Film at Southpoint Park: *Arusi: Persian Wedding* by Marjan Tehrani, **Sat Sep 6**, 9pm (music by MK Groove at 8:30). A chronicle of a man's return to Iran with his American wife for a traditional wedding. Information at tinyurl.com/63ksyk. Free. ▷



– Future Weeks –

Fall for Arts 3 at Gallery RIVAA, **Sun Sep 7-Mon Oct 12**. Gallery hours Sat-Sun 11-5, Wed & Fri 6-9.

Jessica Lappin Campaign Barbecue, **Wed Sep 10**, 6:00-7:30, Lighthouse Park (will move to 546 Main Street if forced by weather). Hot dogs, soda, and bring-your-own anything. RSVP to Lappin2009@gmail.com. Suggested donation \$15; checks payable to Lappin for Council.

Public Safety Youth Summit, a forum for youth and parents, **Wed Sep 10**, 6:30pm, PS/IS 217 cafeteria. Refreshments. (See ad, page 5.)

RIOC Board Meeting, **Thu Sept 11**, 4:30pm, Good Shepherd Community Center. Town-hall meeting, at end of formal session, for resident comments and questions.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, former Islander *Kristin Seely* (smooth jazz) with Bill Heller (Rippingtons) and Adam Seely (Beginnings), **Fri Sep 12**, 6-10pm.

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat Sep 13**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadlines**: Ads in the paper, Thu Sep 4, decision on circulars/inserts for *The Bag*, Tue Sep 9; they are due Thu Sep 11. **Additional issues in 2008**: Sep 27; Oct 11, 25; Nov 8, 22; Dec 6, 20. **2009 schedule**: Jan 17, Feb 7, 21; Mar 7, 21; Apr 4, 18; May 2, 16; June 13, 27; July 4, 25; Aug 29, Sep 12, 26; Oct 10, 24; Nov 7, 21; Dec 12. **2010**: First issue Jan 17; thereafter, every two weeks. **News phone**, **212-826-9055**; urgent matters, **917-617-0449**. **Advertising**, display and classified: **917-587-3278**.

Registration for fall classes at **Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance**, **Sat Sep 13**, 11-3, at the Howe Theatre, 548 Main St. (entrance behind the video store). Classes start Sep 15. Information **212-371-4449**.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, **Sat Sep 13**, 6-10pm.

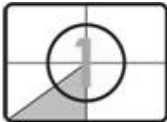
First Annual New York Disabilities Film Festival, **Sun Sep 14**, 1:30pm, Coler-Goldwater south campus auditorium, highlighting the community of diversity on Roosevelt Island. Award-winning film, *Shameless: The Art of Disability*, will be shown; discussion & refreshments to follow. Free. Information: **212-318-4728**.

Book Discussion – *Catch 22* by **Joseph Heller**, **Thu Sep 18**, 6:30pm, New York Public Library Roosevelt Island branch. Books available at the branch here.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, **Fri Sep 19**, 6-10pm.

Music Outdoors at Trellis, *John Christopher* (smooth jazz), **Sat Sep 20**, 6-10pm.

Residents Association Common Council meeting, **Wed Oct 1**, 8pm, Good Shepherd Community Center (lower level); meetings are open to all, and begin with an opportunity for residents to address the Council.



There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave information at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide a phone number for possible follow-up.

Senior Center

Monday
9:30, **Hawaiian Hula**
10:30, **English as 2nd Language**
11:00, **Tai Chi**
12:30, **“Oldies” Movies**
6:00, **Yoga**

Tuesday
9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Blood Pressure**
10:30, **Shoppers’ Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
2:00, **Paint & Sculpt**
7:30, **Games (RISA)**

Wednesday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers’ Bus**
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

Thursday
9:30, **Get Stronger Bones**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
11:00, **Gardening**
12:30, **Movie**

Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **French Class**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events
Labor Day Party, Mon Sep 1, 2pm
Flea Market, Sat Sep 6, 9-5
Stop & Shop, Thu Sep 11, 12noon
Atlantic City trip, Sat Sep 13
General Meeting, Tue Sep 16, 7pm
Flea Market, Sat Sep 20, 9-5
Game Night, Sat Sep 27, 7pm
Yonkers Casino trip, Tue Sep 30, 11:30am

Home-delivered meals
212-744-5022, ext. 1203

End of August 2008, final days of summer.

1. **Board of Directors**: Next meeting September 11, 4:30, town hall meeting to follow. A full agenda is anticipated after the summer hiatus, including a proposed conditional designation of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute (FERI) for development of the FDR Park, several projects ready to go into execution after RFPs, and the usual business of RIOC and reports on many items, the most prominent being mentioned below.

2. **Board Members**: The remaining two seats on the Board have apparently been settled by the Mayor's nomination of Howard Polivy to replace Michael Shinozaki and extending Patrick Stewart's tenure. The Governor's Appointments Office has not yet been officially advised, and no new nominee may take his/her seat until confirmed by the State Senate. With the Legislature out of session, but expected to be recalled for the state budget issue, timing remains uncertain.

3. **Southpoint**: (A) **Renwick Ruin**: Work by the outside contractors is making good progress, removing the most endangered portions of the walls, and numbering the stones and palletizing them for the future. Shoring and interior work to follow. Now appears that more work will be possible within the budgeted \$4.5 million.

(B) **Green Rooms/Wild Gardens**: The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is completing the environmental analysis to permit step one to go forward. Hopefully, for the Board's October meeting.

(C) **FDR Memorial**: The FERI group, having secured additional financing commitments from the city, is seeking further approvals from the state and federal agencies having jurisdiction. FERI has requested RIOC's conditional designation for the proposal, before FERI spends lots of money on the application and development process. The Board is asked to adopt a conditional, non-binding resolution of willingness to proceed, in the same manner as previously utilized for the Octagon, Southtown, and other Island developments with identifiable progress milestones. The item will be on the Board's September 11 agenda. This project has been

The RIOC Column



Steve Shane, President
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation
e-mail: SShane@RIOC.com

the subject of extensive debate and review on the Island. A referendum was held and was notable for the low level of response and the almost equal division of opinion on the merits. The dedicated opposition of some Island residents has been noted. All of the Island's elected representatives have come out with their support for the project. I have spoken with the state Commissioner of Parks, and she has affirmed the long-standing obligation of the state to maintain and operate the memorial if, as, and when built. There are many reviews and permitting steps to be taken, but the time is at hand either to authorize the FERI group to proceed, with required steps and timetables, or to end it.

4. **Tram**: RFP was published in June and a bidders' conference held July 15. Responses are now due September 16. The Empire State Development Corporation's Board approved funding of the state appropriation of \$15 million, a public hearing was held August 5, and ESDC is expected to finally approve it at its September 18 Board meeting. Following receipt of the proposals, rating and ranking, conference with bidders, and selection, the matter will be returned to the RIOC Board in October, probably at a special meeting, for final approval. After approval, a contract will be let and the overhaul process begun, with closure anticipated to begin April of 2009. The duration of closure is estimated at six months, but is not now known. The duration will be determined by the responses and the budget, as both duration and cost for acceleration of the work to reduce the time of closure is part of the required RFP responses.

5. **Park and Restroom facilities**: The facilities to be located at Lighthouse Park are ordered and in fabrication. We have ordered the engineering for site
See **RIOC Column**, page 12

The summer has run its course and, once again, I am psychologically unprepared for autumn. This has been a good summer for us, with trips to Mexico and Vermont (there's a contrast for you!). Sherie and I are just back from a stay in Denver, her hometown. We were unable to stay for the Democratic convention, but we did experience the excitement of Denver's revitalized downtown last Sunday night, with delegates from all over the country taking in the sights.

We stopped at the New York delegation's hotel to wish City Councilmember Jessica Lappin well. Out on the 16th Street Mall we passed a familiar figure and greeted reporter Gabe Pressman, who was in town to blog the convention for WNBC-TV News. You will recall that Gabe recently did a short piece on Roosevelt Island that included interviews with Historical Society president Judy Berdy and me, among others.

A Necessary Music

RIOC offered the last outdoor movie of the season, *Monster House*, at Firefighters Field some weeks ago.

It was great fun, but the short subject that preceded the feature is what caught my attention. I've regaled you with the story of this Roosevelt Island-inspired and -casted film, shot entirely on the Island, and that I was fortunate enough to participate in. Clearly not a documentary, the filmmakers offered it as a 'science fiction' movie. I would characterize it as a mood piece, surrealistic, perhaps, and certainly unexpected. I've seen it three times now, and each time it has elicited comment and debate among those present. If you haven't caught it yet, make it your business to check it out next time there is a screening here.

RIOC Board Elections

Mayor Bloomberg has made his recommendations to the Governor for the remaining open seats on the RIOC Board of Directors, and I couldn't be more disappointed. He opted to appoint Howard Polivy, an excellent candidate who has served the community as an alternate on the RIRA Common Council and as head of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). However, two candidates who received more votes in last February's election, Frank Farance and Erin Feeley-Nahem, were passed over. This "cherry-picking" has nothing to do with the democratic process that RIRA and members of the Maple Tree Group

The RIRA Column



Matthew Katz, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Association
e-mail: MatthewKatz@verizon.net

attempted to bring to Roosevelt Island.

In addition, the Mayor decided to extend the term of Patrick Stewart, an incumbent on the Board, who did not put his name forward in our election last February. This makes the statutory four-year term, written into the 1984 laws that created the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, a sham. I am disappointed that neither he nor David Kraut, an incumbent Board member reappointed by the Governor, saw fit to put their names before their neighbors in that election, to let the community judge whether their voting record entitled them to continue serving. Could this be a function of their contempt for the fundamental principles of democracy, or just for your competence to judge their performance?

Right now, I'm more concerned with creating and maintaining a precedent of elective democracy than with the specific qualifications of the nine Board members. Make no mistake, I was very pleased with the credentials of the six winners of our election; all are professionals with proven Island experience and volunteer chops. However, if the city and state are free to ignore our efforts to offer nominees for the Board, why would anyone spend the year of hard labor producing an election that our working group volunteered to do? And why would anyone undergo the trials of a campaign when, having won the election, you still can lose the appointment?

Our last hope for some semblance of democracy on Roosevelt Island lies with the ninth member of the Board, Charlee Miller, a resident of Southtown. Appointed in the waning days of the Pataki administration, and with barely a year's residency on Roosevelt Island under her belt, Charlee has worked hard to learn the myriad details required of Board members. Her term is up in 2009 and, should Governor Paterson
See **RIRA Column**, page 12

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SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING

•Friday, August 29 at 7:15 pm
•Friday, September 5 at 7:03 pm
•Friday, September 12 at 6:52 pm

Blessing: Boruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Sha-bos Ko-desh.

Translation: Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.



Friday Light
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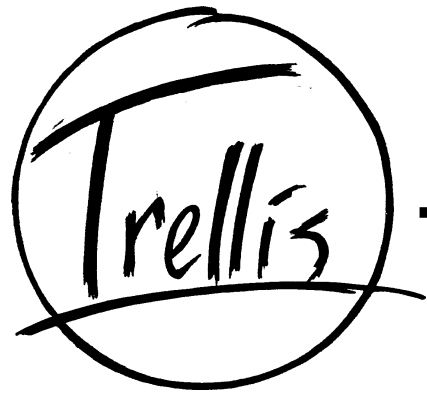
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Steam Plant Has No Energy Future Here, RIOC Says

Steam Plant from page 1

of the Island, engineer Robert Liss, sees the plant as an asset that could be the key to considerable savings in energy costs as they escalate in future years.

That’s not the case, says Shane: “There has been this urban myth floating around. The New York Power Authority (NYPA) did a study that ascertained that there was no benefit to be obtained from the Steam Plant, but we did it again, and demonstrated again that there’s nothing feasible that can be done with it.”

The study, completed earlier this month by Energy & Resource Solutions (ERS) and funded by the New York State Energy Resources Development Administration (NYSERDA), definitely stops short of any grand plan for overall future Island energy needs, seeing only two possibilities that make economic sense now – the first is that conversion to natural gas, the three-year payback. An alternative scenario is the gas-burner retrofit *plus* replacement of the Steam Plant’s aged boilers, at a cost of \$9.3 million with a 4.5-year payback period, and \$1.5 million annual savings thereafter.

But Shane says that the Island’s thermal load, summer compared to winter, wouldn’t justify an attempt to save the Steam Plant for energy purposes. “On analysis, at the end of the day, it is just not feasible unless ConEd is willing to sell us steam from their existing facility,” says Shane. Under such an arrangement, winter-summer load balancing would be irrelevant. But Shane and Turcic also point out that ConEd has given an estimated cost of \$26 million to \$35 million to extend steam lines from “several hundred feet” below the Island, and it’s possible a similar figure would apply to a gas-line extension. They say ConEd would pay a relatively small part of that cost. On the other hand, Turcic doesn’t see the \$26 million as a “real” number, and he would like to pressure ConEd to produce a more realistic estimate. That, he says, would make it more feasible to consider the Island’s overall energy options, looking at both the New York City Health and Hospitals (HHC) needs and the residential possibilities.

Even then, a considerable revision of the natural gas delivery system on the Island could involve tearing up Main Street – not an appealing prospect on an Island with one main road.

Shane and Turcic also say that HHC, the primary customer for the steam generated at the Island plant for the Coler-Goldwater hospital campuses, is on a path toward setting up on-site “package plants” at both the north and south buildings. An HHC engineer confirmed that such

plants are under consideration.

The ERS study looked at using the Steam Plant to provide co-generated heat and electricity for Island residential buildings – particularly Southtown buildings 7 through 9 (planned but not yet under construction) – but observes that earning back the cost of such a conversion, not counting ConEd charges for expanding its natural gas delivery system, would involve a payback of about a dozen years. It concludes that the financial incentives to cooperate in such a plan are not adequate for the Island’s existing residential buildings.

Liss contends that a 12-year payback is attractive, and observes that the energy future of both the nation and state could involve incentives that might substantially increase the attractiveness of some sort of centralized “combined heat and power” (CHP) approach on Roosevelt Island.

A No-Brainer?

Liss calls the simple natural gas retrofit, with its short payback period, “a no-brainer.” Despite complications of Steam Plant ownership and responsibility, Liss told *The WIRE*, “This is an outstanding report by a very professional engineering firm. The Island would save over a million dollars a year, after the payback periods of 2.8 to 4.5 years... We have come to a crossroads. Why would you *not* want to take the opportunity to reduce pollution and save a million dollars a year, with such short periods for recovering the capital costs?”

Shane and Turcic offer a number of reasons. For one thing, they say, the Steam Plant is old and decrepit, and costs would not be limited to a switch from fuel oil to natural gas. They also observe that ConEd, which generates steam at

Ravenswood, just across the east channel, and pipes it under the Island, is not eager to expand its Island delivery systems for either steam or natural gas.

On the other hand, Turcic observes that the package-plant plans being considered for the hospital buildings are likely to involve finding some way to increase gas delivery. He says that the present delivery capacity is committed to Southtown residential construction, and that costly conversions and expansions would be required to increase transmission enough to handle both Southtown and additional demand for the hospital structures – whether at the central Steam Plant or for on-site systems at the north and south campuses.

Both RIOC and HHC anticipate an eventual shutdown and decommissioning of steam generation on the Island, and a decommissioning of the Island’s steam delivery system, which runs under the east promenade. In itself, that will present a problem for the Island, says Turcic. “The problem with shutting down the steam tunnel is that it is not in terrible shape, because it hasn’t suffered through the freeze-thaw cycles that the Island has every winter. If you kept it warm [from waste heat], you could expect that reasonable repairs over time would keep up with the problems. But if – or when – we turn the heat off, and we can’t heat the tunnels just to heat the tunnels, I could see that in five years the east seawall would be in such bad shape that you wouldn’t want to walk on it.”

Turcic observes that the tunnels have also been a convenient place for other utilities, such as Verizon, to string lines. Those uses will have to be considered when the tunnel is no longer needed for steam delivery.

Steam Plant “Ownership”

An ownership complication arises because Roosevelt Island is owned by New York City, but most of it is leased to New York State for development purposes until 2068. The lease assigns the Steam Plant to the state, but HHC operates it. Turcic says that the high pay of stationary engineers who run the Steam Plant, plus structural concerns at the plant, are a definite damper on HHC interest in keeping it going any longer than necessary. Satellite plants at each hospital building would be more efficient and less costly to operate because fewer people, and probably lower-pay people, would operate them, he says.

The ownership structure places the greatest incentive for any quick-payback upgrade with the city government – but for a facility “owned” by RIOC, a New York State public-benefit corporation. At times, RIOC has had other uses of that land in mind. During the Pataki administration, the

agency sought developer ideas for it, though none materialized. Most recently, the Steam Plant has been included in the Racquet Club’s scenario for future expansion, as described in the August 3 issue of *The WIRE*. In planning, RIOC is definitely anticipating a decommissioning of the plant.

In any case, Shane and Turcic say HHC wants to decommission the Steam Plant in favor of the localized systems at the hospital buildings.

Liss observes that any reversal of course on the Steam Plant’s future would have to be commanded from Albany. “The Governor’s office gets both RIOC and the city together and basically says, ‘This is the way I think this should be done.’” Liss even suggests that the planned Tramway upgrade, which he considers unnecessary, should be canceled or delayed in favor of using the



Engineer Robert Liss

state funds for the power plant upgrade (see related editorial, page 2).

CHP Possibilities

Liss also projects that, once the simplest quick-payback conversion of the Steam Plant is done, the longer payback periods involved in the larger combined-heat-and-electric-power (CHP) conversions could eventually become attractive. While energy and environmental incentives in present law aren’t adequate to persuade the owners of existing residential buildings to adapt to a central CHP system, Southtown’s remaining buildings (7 through 9, slated for the east side of the new Main Street) could be designed from the outset for steam-powered heat and cooling. Eventually, incentives might be enacted that would encourage Rivercross, Eastwood, Island House, and Westview to use the Steam Plant’s output. For example, steam might provide common-area heating and also drive turbines that would generate electricity. The ERS study suggests that it is “evident that a few of the [existing apartment buildings] could make good candidates for individual CHP systems” in what is called a “distributed system.”

The key starting point, Liss feels, is conversion to natural gas. “I believe that if we don’t get the power plant converted, Hudson-Related, in further Southtown development, will, on their own, have gas-fired generators in the basements of buildings 7 through 9.” Liss says this would eliminate that “thermal load” as an added reason to make fuller use of the Steam Plant. “Please understand that Hudson and Related are already doing co-generation in other buildings that they own. This is not new technology.”

Liss says that Lincoln Towers, on the West Side, is saving \$500 to \$1,000 per apartment on power costs by using such a system. He sees a long-term scenario that starts with the hospital buildings’ requirement for steam, extends to some form of power for Southtown buildings 7 through 9, then becomes viable through technology or tax incentives for some form of power for several of the Island’s existing residential buildings. Those forms of power might be influenced favorably by future technological innovation, he says, or by energy and environmental incentives.

“This would put control of the residential buildings’ energy future in their own hands,” says Liss, who also sees an advantage in becoming independent of the ConEd grid, even while having access to it in the event of a local failure. He points out that surplus power generated on the Island can also be fed into the ConEd grid and produce income, though that income would be minor under present tariffs.

The ERS study presents four CHP scenarios:

Scenario	Capital Cost	Income/year	Payback
Present load*	\$ 6.6M	\$ 543,824	12.1 yrs
Add new Sportspark	\$ 7.4M	\$ 573,735	12.9
Add Southtown 7-9	\$10.8M	\$ 915,468	11.8
Add Rivercross	\$11.8M	\$ 988,772	11.9

*Coler, Goldwater, Sportspark, Bus Garage, AVAC

After the payback periods, the projected annual income could benefit RIOC, fund a contracted plant operator, or be passed on as savings to the end-users – or each of these in some measure. The longer payback period, when considered with the need for system changes in existing buildings, makes these scenarios “iffy.” The ERS study concludes that “there is not a viable CHP project available for RIOC,” because such projects would require the “owners of facilities [residential buildings] to alter their plans with no significant economic benefit.” For example, significant costly changes would be required at Rivercross, with no clear indication of savings, even long-term. The study further concludes, “There are numerous economic and practical reasons why a central CHP plant does not make sense.”

The 45-page ERS study is on *Website NYC10044* with this issue of *The WIRE* at nyc10044.com.

See **Steam Plant**, next page



Two of the boilers that provide steam on the Island.



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Steam Plant from previous page

Eastwood

In another energy development, Urban American, which runs Eastwood, has informed its residents that it will soon start installation of submetering in the building. Submetering has been shown to reduce energy consumption by shifting the economic impact for power use from a building as a whole to the individual units within the building. The memo given to Eastwood tenants says they'll get a rent reduction once submetering is in place, and their electric use will be billed separately. The Urban American notice emphasizes repeatedly, "With a submetering system, each apartment only pays for the electricity it consumes."

Stats

The ERS report is a trove of statistics on the Island's energy use. For example, non-RIOC properties (excluding The Octagon) show an annual electricity use of 85.5 million kilowatt hours (kWh), with this breakdown:

Coler-Goldwater Hospital	22%
Eastwood (1,003 units)	19%
Manhattan Park (1,107)	14%
Rivercross (377)	12%
Southtown 1-6 (1,205)	11%
(5-6 are under construction)	
Island House (400)	10%
Westview (361)	9%
RIOC properties break down this way:	
Tramway	27%
Motorgate (full structure)	25%
Sportspark	11%
Stores & offices	11%
Good Shepherd Chapel	9%
Schools	9%
Parks & lighting	6%
AVAC building	2%
Steam Plant	1%

The ERS study describes the Steam Plant as consisting of "eight #6 fuel oil-fired, water-tube boilers... Four of the units are no longer used... The four active boilers were manufactured in 1956 by Babcock and Wilcox." It says that annual measurements of boiler efficiency score between 63% and 75% against a more typical standard of 82-

86%. A \$5.1 million gas burner retrofit would reduce the cost of steam from \$30.20 per million pounds to \$22.28, with the difference of \$7.92 producing the payback period of 2.8 years. At nearly double the cost, full boiler replacement would reduce the number to \$21.22 per million pounds, with a 4.5-year payback period.

Stumbling Blocks

Depending on the option taken, the Island's current natural gas supply could be inadequate to provide the gas needed for a switch from oil, requiring ConEd to provide greatly expanded capacity to the Island, presumably at a considerable capital cost. The study estimates \$1.5 million. It also reports a ConEd conclusion that "the anticipated loads of the Southtown 5-9 buildings would essentially exhaust the existing gas capacity on the Island."

However, state tariffs require ConEd to shoulder the cost of expanding its delivery of natural gas to customers who contract for a certain level of use, and maintain that level on an annual basis.

The study summarizes drawbacks to a RIOCI involvement in the more complex CHP use of the Steam Plant:

- Gas service unavailable in required capacity
- Revenue from steam sales too low to support the economics
- Customers would need to alter facilities, with no significant economic benefit
- Significant new capital cost
- No RIOCI experience in operating a central CHP plant

The study finally recommends against a central CHP facility, and suggests that RIOCI "work with its constituents, residents, and developers... to promote the use of distributed CHP in the individual facilities [for] 'greening' of the Island, lowering costs to residents, reducing pollution, and improving the overall energy infrastructure on the Island."

It says that Rivercross, Southtown buildings 7-9, the Sportspark/tennis facility, and Coler-Goldwater are "good candidates for individual CHP systems."

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Births



RIOC employee Erica Wilder and her husband, Akhnaten Spencer-El, have a new baby daughter, Ekye Sabriyah Spencer-El, who came into the world Friday, August 1, weighing 7 lb., 8 oz, and 19 inches long.

Send birth announcements to editor@MainStreetWIRE with digital photo and appropriate information, or mail photo and information (with return address) to:

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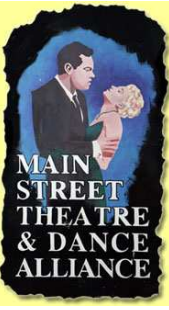


Taren Hastings and Cliff Mangual have a new daughter. She is Jule Calyse Mangual, born July 1 and weighing 7 lb., 2 oz.

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Ike Nahem: Four Times a Week, 135 mph to D.C.

Nahem from page 1
with the four-year-old’s dream. *The romance* is all in the imaginations of outsiders.

For Ike Nahem, a 56-year-old Roosevelt Islander, *it’s a job* and it always has been *a job*. As he put it recently, it started shortly after college because “I needed the work.”

The work, in the ’70s, was freight, for the Norfolk & Western out of Chicago, where Nahem needed something to provide income as a necessary incidental to a life of determined political activism. At Indiana University in the late ’60s and early ’70s, he had earned his degree in political science and history while intensely involved in student demonstrations aimed at creating a just America that would eschew misguided foreign adventures like Viet Nam and in which people of all colors and backgrounds would receive equal opportunity in the arms of the American dream.

Acela to Washington

But this is 2008, and there is a train to take to Washington. As his workday starts, it’s all business: Collecting the papers that warn of restricted speeds for some stretches of track, checking in, making arrangements for an outsider who will ride shotgun on this Thursday morning trip.

He learns that his train, coming in from Boston, will be 45 minutes late. This allows for some relaxed pre-trip camaraderie in the crew room at Penn Station, where he greets fellow railroaders. For one, he has a small bag of sand, brought back from a vacation trip to Spain. (The man’s wife collects sand from all over, and Nahem has remembered.) He greets his conductor for this trip, Manny Jordan, and then settles down for a few minutes of talk about politics, clearly a subject he favors over shop talk.

Policy & Politics

“The main activity I do now is that I’m involved with groups that are fighting U.S. sanctions against Cuba.” He heads up one of those groups, Cuba Solidarity New York. “We oppose the embargo and travel restrictions. It’s a strong movement among churches.” He has “slowed down a bit,” he admits, but “it’s how I spend most of my time outside the job.” That has involved organizing legal trips to Cuba, among other things. For Nahem, it’s clearly a matter of justice. Pushing his country to do what’s right is the continuation of a thread that stretches back to those Indiana college days.

As his train gets a clearance to pull out of Penn Station, Nahem advances a speed-control lever while describing the route, which starts with the tunnel to New Jersey. He calls on only a little of the 12,338 horsepower at his command,

The view from the cab leaving Penn Station



and eases these 1,171,000 pounds of train – plus passengers – up to just 15 miles per hour. “Now I’m releasing all the brakes... My pantograph is drawing power from the wire overhead... My bell is on... Once I get my entire train into this tunnel, I can increase my speed to 60 miles per hour... When it comes up to 16 miles per hour, I have to do a running brake test... OK, the brakes are working...”

Emerging from the tunnel in New Jersey, Nahem advances the speed to 75, then up to 90 most of the way to the Secaucus Bridge. On this trip, speeds will range as high as 135 miles an hour where the track and conditions permit, but this Acela could do 150 without breaking a sweat, and its top speed, as designed, is 165.

The Union

A sense of history is part of the Ike Nahem package. For him, the so-called *romance of railroading* is replaced with a practical and political interest in his union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). “Eugene Debs was a fireman on the railroad, from Indiana. He was the first to attempt to try to organize one big union of all the railroading crafts. They had the big Pullman strike in the 1890s. That was crushed by the government, basically. There’s still a tradition – it hasn’t been shattered completely.”

For his part, Nahem was active and persuasive last year when, after “eight years of stalling,” as he puts it, Amtrak management offered a contract to the locomotive engineers. The union’s general chairman told his membership that it was the best they could get, but Nahem – a rank and file member of the union – didn’t think so.

“The initial agreement, after eight years, didn’t provide for back pay. It had a lot of rules changes that were not in

our interest. It had ambiguous language on grievances. I wrote a number of papers and, thanks to e-mail and the Internet, you can get this stuff out. We had a real debate – it was very democratic. People said my stuff was quite influential. The discussion lasted 30 days, and we voted the proposed contract down by a two-to-one margin.

“That was a proud moment. The other unions were watching, because they got roughly the same offer, and everybody was angry after being jerked around for so many years. It was a turning point. The pressure on Amtrak management increased to the point where even the Republican-appointed Presidential Emergency Board, the body appointed under the Railway Labor Act, ruled in our favor, which shocked everybody.”

Amtrak gave in, a new contract was offered, and this time Nahem wrote a paper supporting it. The union membership approved it.

Even so, he’s not altogether happy with the union’s situation. The BLET, with 39,000 members, became a unit of the Teamsters. “You just can’t sustain a small union anymore,” Nahem says, and points out that railroading is still broken into a series of “craft unions” – each job category separately unionized – rather than having an industry-wide union like the United Auto Workers, which has all plant-floor workers in the automobile industry. That difference is a matter of history: railroad unions were formed before industry-wide organization became the rule.

On the job, locomotive engineers like Ike Nahem deal with strict regulations. “If you violate one of these speed restrictions by more than 10 miles an hour, you can be taken out of service for 30 days,” Nahem points out, and he is diligent about speed-reduction notifications as well as small signs in the roadbed that may impose an ad hoc speed restriction for roadbed work.

“It’s understandable,” he says, speaking of a Washington memorial to railroad employees who’ve lost their lives on the job. “Every year or two, somebody gets killed.”

This is a solemn subject for Nahem, and it leads him to the difficult topic of suicide by train. “There isn’t an engineer out here who has worked more than a few years who hasn’t had a suicide. I’ve been very lucky. I’ve had only one.” As the train approaches the location where “his” suicide stepped onto the tracks, he remembers the moments: “It was about 10 years ago. The guy was standing on the side, by his SUV. There are areas where it’s pretty open, like this, with no fences, where people can run across. I was coming east, going only 80, and I was approaching him, I saw this look. He wasn’t ‘in the gauge.’ He was off to the side, and I’m blowing my horn and I said to myself, as I got close, ‘Jesus Christ, this guy is going to kill himself,’ and right at that moment he just threw himself in front of my locomotive. It’s a very traumatic experience – but a very popular form of suicide. It makes a big statement. My guy – it turned out his wife had left him, he was a cocaine addict... I’ve had only the one, but...” Nahem’s voice trails off as he dreads the possibility of another.

“The top speed here is 135,” he says, as though to remind himself, and to put his mind elsewhere. At these speeds, and with the weight of this train, there’s no stopping in time when someone steps onto the tracks. The official stopping distance is just short of two miles. Even in an emergency, it’s 8,840 feet – just short of a mile and a half.

Family

Nahem is married to Erin Feely-Nahem, the former PS/IS 217 PTA president who ran in this community’s February 5 election of RIOC Board nominees. (The Governor appointed three nominees, but left her out and, earlier this month, so did the mayor, when he appointed only one community nominee.) Their son is Andrew, a PS 217 student.

Ike Nahem is a tall man, lanky, bordering on wiry, with a full head of curly hair and glasses that act as mag-

nifiers over eyes that take in distant details. When a subject interests him – and few subjects do not – he grows animated and speaks quickly but articulately, drawing on the vocabulary of an essayist and student of history. He has a collection of short papers he’d like to publish one day, when time permits.

A particular interest is the Germany of the 1930s, just before Adolf Hitler came to power. “If I had the time, that’s the book I’d like to write. There are so many myths. Most people assume that Hitler seduced the overwhelming majority of the German people. But in reality, he never got more than 27% of the vote. When he seized power – or



Nahem in his “office,” controlling 12,338 horsepower.

power was handed over by big business – his popularity was declining.

“The real basis of big-business support for Hitler was crushing the unions. The unions were strong and big business wanted to crush them. They hired Hitler’s goons to bust up strikes and union meetings. A million Germans were put into concentration camps for union activity. The crisis was so deep that there was no longer any basis for parliamentary government. The workers’ leadership was divided between the socialists and the communists, and Stalin’s policy was that the socialists were a greater evil than the Nazis – that Hitler was just transitory. He ordered the German communists not to unite with the German socialists. Together, they had more votes than Hitler [but they didn’t work together].

“Every politician, whatever the issue, talks about Hitler, but they rarely get it right. The term *Hitler* has become an epithet. They’ll say, ‘Bush is a fascist.’ I hate Bush as much as anybody, but he’s not a fascist. He does things that any fascist would be proud of... But fascism is when every single inch of democratic space is closed – no freedom of the press, the unions are crushed... Those conditions don’t exist here. Bush has to function within the framework of American capitalist democracy. If the crisis in America became as intense as the crisis was in Germany, then somebody like Hitler could get a mass following and could have a program destroying what existed under the old social order.”

Knowing the Route

As the trip to Washington continues, Nahem shows he knows the route – where every signal is, where interlocks of switches will allow Amtrak’s control room to move him to a different track. Amtrak’s engineers “qualify” for their routes. They study the details of each section of track and physical plant along the way, and they are tested. They’re watched, too. On the Acela, a computerized recorder tracks every movement of the few controls that set speed, determine acceleration, or brake the locomotive and six cars as they speed along the way.

The Acela’s top speeds become truly evident only when another Acela approaches. It is there. Then, in an atomized splinter of time, it is gone. Mostly, though, 80 miles an hour feels something like 40 in a car, and 135 doesn’t seem much faster than 80. On the rougher stretches of track, there’s a lot of road to feel, but none of that gets transmitted to passengers, whose ride is nicely cushioned. On curves, the Acela’s passenger-carrying cars tilt in a computerized leaning that approaches 9 inches, or 8.5 degrees. It’s a smooth, fast ride from New York to Washington, at a one-way price near \$130.

Nahem himself becomes a passenger as he “deadheads” back to New York. On this day, it’s aboard the same Acela he drove to Washington, and a chance for him to dip into a few of the seven newspapers he reads every day. “I’m a news junkie,” he admits. But he also devours books, still the radicalized student of the ’70s.

See **Nahem**, next page

Ike Nahem’s Recommended Reading

The Autobiography of Malcolm X
Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War by Ernesto Che Guevara
The novels of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Elmore Leonard
The Mandarins by Simone de Beauvoir
A People’s History of the United States by Howard Zinn
My Life by Leon Trotsky

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Resident Awaiting Trial On Bank Robbery Charge

by Gene Roman

The Roosevelt Island resident charged with robbing the Capital One Bank at 991 Third Avenue on April 23 appeared in New York State Supreme Court, Criminal Term, on August 5.

Salif Diallo entered Judge William Wertzel’s 13th-floor courtroom at 100 Centre Street, handcuffed and wearing black leather pants, a beige shirt, and orange sneakers without shoe laces.

Diallo, 24, an African-American male, allegedly entered the Capital One branch on April 23 at approximately 4:19 p.m., and handed the teller a handwritten note, according to court records.

“Give me all of the money or else I shoot,” the note read, according to the criminal complaint filed by Detective Thomas Raczynski of the NYPD’s Major Case Squad.

Diallo fled via the Roosevelt Island Tramway. He was taken into custody the next day through the efforts of an unidentified Tram passenger, a RIOC employee, and Lt. Gary Yee of Public Safety.

A review of court records by *The WIRE* revealed that Diallo is alleged to have robbed the same Capital One Bank on April 12, an HSBC Bank at 557 Seventh Avenue on February 27, and a branch of Washington Mutual Bank at 510 Park Avenue on April 14.

In the other robbery attempts, Diallo is said to have handed the tellers different notes: “I want \$2,500. All hundred dollar bills. I have a gun,” “Give me all the money or somebody dies. I have a gun,” “This is a

robbery. I have a gun. Give me hundreds and fifties.” He escaped with a total of \$7,494 from three of the banks, according to Detective Raczynski’s complaint.

The teller at Washington Mutual Bank told Diallo that “she had no money,” according to Raczynski. Diallo then fled the scene, according to court records.

A New York County grand jury indicted Diallo on three counts of robbery in the third degree, one count of grand larceny in the third degree, and one count of attempted robbery in the third degree. Diallo pled not guilty to all charges during his initial arraignment on June 20 before Judge Marcy Kahn.

One count of robbery in the third degree and one count of grand larceny in the third degree, associated with the alleged robbery of the HSBC Bank on February 27, were dismissed in Diallo’s appearance before Judge William Wertzel on July 22.

Diallo has been in the custody of the Department of Corrections since June 18 for violating probation. Court records show that on April 3, he was convicted of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree and sentenced to five years probation and \$275 in court costs.

Diallo is being represented by Don A. Murray of Shalloy and Murray of Forest Hills, Queens. In response to questions about the case, he said, “I have nothing to say.”

Diallo’s case was adjourned until September 16 by Judge Wertzel. He is being held at the Otis Bantum Correctional Center on Rikers Island.

Nahem from previous page

Politics of Infrastructure

While he’s not as enamored of the romance of railroading as hobbyists, his job meets his interest in history on common ground when he talks about how railroads have gotten short shrift from government. One problem with high-speed rail travel, he points out, is that America’s railroads were put in place in the 19th century. In Europe, 20th-century wars tore everything up, so modernized railroads were a matter of rebuilding and looking forward to the straight runs of track needed by high-speed trains. Here, the trains run on old right-of-way, hampered by the age of the stock and by the many curves that were built into the system originally.

But more important to Nahem is the fact that Amtrak is running on near-empty much of the time. “Conservative politicians and others will blast Amtrak as being on the dole, but the subsidy that Amtrak gets by comparison with highways, for example, is minimal. For the last 30 years, money has been doled out to Amtrak with an eyedropper. If you compare the United States with Europe, it’s ridiculous. I like my car as much as anybody, but the idea that people actually prefer to be in a traffic jam rather than in a comfortable train is absurd.

“There needs to be a massive investment in infrastructure, but the funds are barely

there to do the necessary maintenance. You see the country spending 30 billion a month in Iraq. So when they say they have no money, that really means they have no money for things that benefit people.

“It’s a matter of choice. It becomes a political question. People will eventually start demanding more and better mass transit. Public transportation has not been prioritized properly. Now, with the rise of gasoline prices, a lot of these things are being considered more carefully.

“But the price that society paid for letting those things go is really coming more to the fore. All the New Deal reforms that FDR put in place to save the capitalist system from itself have now been dismantled. Financial services went crazy with things like collateralized debt obligations, weird financial instruments, and more.

“The way this applies to railroads is that it’s like spending for public utilities. That becomes a social and political question: Would we spend money on things like public transportation? On national health care? All these things cut across the current mentality of letting private capital run everything.”

As optimistic as he is that people will ultimately drive government to the right focus and priorities, Ike Nahem is a realist. He adds, “It will take political *movements* – to *demand* these things – to get them done.”

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Westview Fighting Hike

While *The WIRE* was on vacation this summer, DHCR conducted Rent Determination Hearings for Island House and Westview. Sandra Zwerling submitted the following report on the Westview hearing.

by Sandra Zwerling

The August 13 Rent Determination Hearing for Westview conducted by the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) with representatives of tenants and the buildings’ owners was intense. Over 170 tenants attended, many carrying signs, such as *Inefficiency=Eviction*, *Wastevew or Westview*, and *No Rent Hike*.

Westview’s legal, engineering, and accounting consultants forcefully attacked management’s request for a 75% rent hike. Chad Marlowe, Westview’s lawyer, cited the Mitchell-Lama law defining the rent determination procedure, which lists the obligations of the building’s owners and of DHCR. It says that the owners must do everything possible to get rid of inefficiencies; they must reduce the need for a rent increase, reducing expenses and practicing cost efficiencies, with no warehousing of vacant apartments. DHCR is bound by the law to see that this is done. Additionally, under the law, the impact of a rent increase on the tenants must be considered. None of this has been done, Marlowe said.

In 2004, when the Sheldrake organization signed a contract to buy Westview, they began to warehouse vacant apartments. With 1,000 names on the waiting list for a Westview apartment, 31 were warehoused, and \$1 million in income was lost, which, under the present budget proposal, tenants are required to pay. Additionally, a \$4 million windfall that accrued to Westview when the contract with Sheldrake was broken is not in the budget.

Capital expenditures for enacting energy efficiencies (replacing windows, light bulbs) could be repaid in three months, but owners have refused to do this, Marlowe said. Westview’s energy consultant cited a survey done in 2001 with proposals that would have yielded savings of \$80,000 a year.

Marlowe cited the \$752,000 collected by way of the last rent increase to replace elevators. The elevators were not replaced, and now they are asking for another rent increase to buy new elevators.

Both Marlowe and Westview’s accountant, Mark Friedman, challenged the financial management of Westview. The mort-

gage has never been refinanced (as it has been in Rivercross), and there is more than \$30 million owed on the property, whose original purchase price was \$23 million.

Jessica Lappin and Micah Kellner advocated for the tenants.

The chair of the Westview Taskforce, Opher Pail, said the owners have no incentive to run the building properly. They run up expenses and expect rent increases to cover them. Pail spoke about the Letter of Intent that was drafted over a period of years for tenants to buy Westview, which was agreeable to the owners and tenants, and which would have kept apartments affordable and could have yielded enough money to make the \$23 million in required repairs. This was stymied because former Governor Spitzer was against privatization, but the new governor is more receptive, he said.

David Hirschhorn, lawyer for the owners, agreed with the points made by Marlowe and Pail, but part of the problem, he said, is years of keeping rents low. The tenants found this funny, as they know that Westview rents are among the highest in Mitchell-Lama buildings.

Marlowe said Hirschhorn and Lucido are good men. At the present time, they can choose between asking for an 80% increase or selling the building to the tenants. Hirschhorn replied they could not get a conversion and withdrawal plan in place, nor could they withdraw the rent increase application.

Tenants spoke passionately. Paul Lenner of 625 Main Street said this request for a rent increase makes the notion of affordability absurd. Matthew Katz, President of RIRA, outlined the history of the General Development Plan, which provided affordable housing in the early 1970s. It was Ed Logue, President of the Urban Development Corporation, Mayor John Lindsay, and Governor Nelson Rockefeller who made this happen. Since then, there has been no additional affordable housing. The GDP has been modified and amended, and there are no more plans for affordable housing. Half of the affordable housing stock was lost when Eastwood was sold. As a result, all of Roosevelt Island’s handicapped and senior residents will be gone in one generation.

The Island on the Web

Compiled by Rick O’Conor
rooseveltislander.blogspot.com

AM New York – Neighborhood Profile – tinyurl.com/5rxa4x
Roosevelt Islander – Gristedes at Southtown? – tinyurl.com/6ca8wa
NY Times – Subway escalators installed – tinyurl.com/5f4u6a
Roosevelt Islander – Was Andy Garcia apartment-hunting here? – tinyurl.com/5zel7d
Roosevelt Island 360 – Southpoint Wedding – tinyurl.com/5fn6m7
Scientist Tours Island, thinks it’s utopia – tinyurl.com/6jwdnh
Roosevelt Island Dogs – Ticks on Island – tinyurl.com/5dvfjr
Digital Girl – Bostonian moves to Octagon, loves it – tinyurl.com/58kqmp
Roosevelt Island 360 – Child rides the Tram alone – tinyurl.com/57drag
Roosevelt Islander – Fly above Island and the River – tinyurl.com/697y4j
Website NYC10044 – Consultant’s Report on Steam Plant and Island Energy – nyc10044.com

Editorial from page 2

replacement is, as noted, a costly matter. Much of this is what Mark Ponton, a RIOC Board member until recently, has been saying. He found a way, through expert scientific testing that was beyond the testing capability of RIOC’s contracted consultant, to get the Tram to speak in its own defense. (See the August 3 *WIRE*.)

We disagree with Ponton in his supposition that, should we have a sudden need for a Tramway upgrade in a year or two or three, the Governor and legislature will hurry to provide the \$15 million that we would give up if we don’t take it now. Governors and legislatures have been known to disagree at length and get nothing done for a long time. Budget squeezes and freezes can stall important activity.

So we think that the RIOC Board and RIOC administration should prevail upon the state administration to allow the Island to put that \$15 million – plus the \$10 million of Island money – in the bank. Call it the *Tramway Replacement Endowment*, if it needs a name. Claims that this kind of thing is impossible with government are specious. If the political will is there, it can be done.

Experts have spoken. They’ve said that the Tram, as it stands and with vigilant maintenance, could easily have another 30 years of life in it, and it’s safe. Other experts – *experts with a vested interest in having the work of a Tramway rebuild* – have offered no concrete end-of-life estimate, nor have they sounded safety alarms.

And RIOC Board member Michael Shinozaki has pointed out that the planned “upgrade” would actually *downgrade* the track-cable tensioning system, replacing the current dynamic system, which is flexible, with a hard-anchored static system that assigns all the responsibility for coping with stress (like summer expansion and winter contraction) to the cables themselves.

The Tramway that we have now can be improved with small upgrades and proper attention to testing and maintenance. It can last a long time. And the longer we can wait before replacing today’s Tram, the longer its replacement will last once replacement *is* necessary.

Mark Ponton has suggested that the reason we’re upgrading the Tram today is that nobody in charge – not the RIOC Board, not the RIOC administration – is willing to be the guy who says, *Let’s not*, only to find months later that the Tram has failed, perhaps catastrophically. But there is no scenario for “catastrophic” failure that wouldn’t apply equally to the upgraded Tram.

When we look at the risks and inconveniences of the upgrade, and what Ponton calls the “oops factor” – the unforeseen project-stopper or Achilles’ heel discovered in an almost-finished job – we rate them as roughly equal to the inconveniences and risks of sticking with the Tram that has served us so well, and clearly has many years of life left in it.

Sticking with the existing Tram and doing minor upgrades, we can save nearly \$20 million (including \$10 million of Island money), at least temporarily, and perhaps for a long time.

It’s not as glamorous to maintain today’s Tram as it is to bring a shiny new set of cabins into the world. It’s not as overtly heroic to keep this one as it is to manage a major upgrade project. But it makes more sense, and the RIOC Board should demand full and precise answers in the engineering study now in progress.

In doing so, the Board should recognize the history of this affair: We are about to spend \$25 million-plus and lose a year of Tram service, because then-RIOC President Herb Berman couldn’t say *mea culpa* and, instead, found a scapegoat for his administration’s failures in the solid, reliable equipment.

DL

Shane Speaks For Tram Plan

RIOC President Steve Shane disagrees strongly with the view expressed in this editorial (begins on page 2, ends at left), and with Mark Ponton’s assessment of the existing Tram, as expressed in the August 3 issue of *The WIRE*. On Tuesday afternoon, he made these comments to *The WIRE*.

“It’s really essential, especially given the frailty of the subway system, to have a separated Tram system so that, for both the planned and unplanned maintenance outages, we would always have the availability of one side. To me, that was the compelling, defining argument, and if we have the money to do it, it’s absolutely worthwhile to do it, without trying to justify it in terms of whether the existing system will survive another one or two or five years.

“Sooner or later, with a system that is 30-odd years old, no matter how you maintain it, it’s going to have a breakdown. It’s had a breakdown in the past, and it will have them in the future. The maintenance will become more and more difficult – and getting parts for an aging system becomes more and more of a problem.

“The flip answer to that, *Just stockpile all of those parts*, doesn’t work. Unless you stockpile an entire Tram, you don’t know what’s going to be needed. And to stockpile the major elements – gears and bullwheels and all of those things that might fail – is a *huge* economic matter. So it’s nuts, absolutely nuts, to do what Mark Ponton proposes to do, which is to keep it going with baling wire and chewing gum. If you talk to the people who are maintaining it and running it, particularly Armando [Cordova, Tramway supervisor], he will clearly express his increasing frustration with keeping it going. He loves it; that is his baby. But all these little failures are cumulative. It’s a mechanical system that needs upgrading.”

Question: What if the 2006 incident hadn’t happened?

“We’d be going right along as we were at that time [and] we wouldn’t have the money in hand to do what we are now about to do. It’s only in the emergency and the obvious public discomfort that was created then that the state legislature stepped up and appropriated that \$15 million. I have no idea whether they would do that in today’s budget crisis, Mr. Ponton’s confidence notwithstanding in his easy claim that no politician would turn us down. There are a lot of competing needs in this state, and you never know at what given moment it might be made available.

“[Before the 2006 incident], the Tram had been tested and it did perform in emergency drills but, when called on in the real emergency, it failed at the third level. We had backup after backup, and it failed. You can never test these systems fully except in crisis – you can do drills, do whatever you want, but until you load it up and, in the crisis, you try and get it to work, you just don’t know. What finally happened is that the seals on the hydraulic pump that was run by the diesel engine failed. Every pump, at some point, has the potential of the failure of a seal, and you can test it and test it and test it, and it doesn’t fail. At some point, it will fail. When called upon in this instance, it failed, and the prior two methodologies for dealing with the crisis didn’t work. That’s not an administrative failure. It’s life in a mechanical system. Things can and will go wrong in a mechanical system, so what you need is redundancy. You need failsafe systems, and you need to be super-careful, and if you have an aging mechanical system – and I don’t care whether it’s us or the MTA or Amtrak or the FAA – you’re going to have accidents.”

renew RIRA at the ballot box, and this year, as we choose a new U.S. president on November 5, we shall also elect a RIRA president and vice president in an Island-wide contest, as well as representatives from each building complex. I’ll have more to say about the nuts and bolts of our elective process in subsequent issues, but it’s not too soon for you, as a resident of Roosevelt Island, to consider serving your neighbors and yourself by running for a seat on the Common Council. RIRA will create Nomination and Election Committees in September, and open nominations and the campaign season in October.

Our constitution requires Council Members to attend the monthly meetings (three consecutive absences spell expulsion) and work on at least one committee. Actually, each Council reinvents itself, taking on the issues of the day and the projects that individuals and/or committees devise. We are all volunteers with lives to lead, and we all put in the

SPORTSWIRE

Roosevelt Island Youth Program Soccer League kicks off in September! Mandatory evaluations will take place on Octagon Field on Saturday, September 6 for Juniors and Seniors, and on Pony Field for Minors. Start time is 9:30 a.m. Kinderkickers will begin on Saturday, September 13 at Capobianco Field. Information on age groups and registration can be found at RIYouth.com, or at the Youth Center at 506 Main Street.

Beyond Sports

More fall programming is in store at the Youth Center, with new classes, equipment, and furniture. Music lessons for guitar and piano are on the schedule for beginners through advanced.

The Beacon Program at PS/IS 217 will also provide plenty of after-school programming for kids and adults.

Stop by the Youth Center, the website, or the Beacon desk at the school for more information.

RIOC Column from page 3

preparation and made arrangements for porta-sans to be available in the interim. We have increased trash-collection frequency, especially on weekends, to try to keep things orderly.

6. Octagon Ferry Dock: Studies for required work and permitting under way. We met with city officials at the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the Department of Transportation to determine what modifications to the piers might be necessary. Initial environmental assessment papers have been received, and are being studied in preparation for next steps with the Octagon developer and the city to include designating RIOC as the lead agency in the environmental review process. The city has indicated that it is very unlikely that ferry service could be in place before the end of 2009.

7. Playing Fields: Engineering work on replacement of drains and playing surfaces for the Octagon Park soccer field is going forward. Please note that after October 1 the scheduling of off-Island groups for use of the fields has been rearranged so that only Islanders will have access to Capobianco Field for open unscheduled time during the week. A schedule of times of reservation is available on RIOC’s website.

8. Open Swim: RIOC has hired a lifeguard for the new Open Swim hours at Sportspark, Monday to Friday, 6:00-9:00 a.m. So far, a small but growing crowd is showing up, including several seniors. Please come and enjoy doing your morning workouts in the pool. We are reviewing the possibility of extending open hours during school vacations.

9. RISAR: RIOC is waiting for RISAR to deliver the required materials and approvals.

10. Movies & Shakespeare: *Monster House* on August 9 was well attended by the family crowd. A subsequent event of a more adult movie at Southpoint by an off-Island provider was seemingly also a success. The presentation of *A Midsummer’s Nights Dream* was well received by a small but appreciative audience.

11. Filming: Roosevelt Island continues to be a desirable location for film shoots and we had an event last week. Staff will always try to minimize disruption to regular activities of Island residents.

12. Emergency Management Planning: The State Emergency Management Office met with staff to discuss state resources as applicable to the Island and interaction with the city’s Office of Emergency Management. The function and training of the Community Emergency Response Team were discussed. The special needs population and the peculiar geography of Roosevelt Island were the basis for the discussion. The emergency response plan is subject to constant review, but the emphasis was for “shelter in place” as the best option in a metropolitan area.

14. Bicycle Safety & Helmet Day: Public Safety hosted a wonderfully attended event on Thursday, August 14, in Good Shepherd Plaza. The Department of Transportation and RIOC handed out free bicycle helmets to the kids and many parents. Good job. Now let’s see all those helmets on the riders.

15. State Budget: In response to the Governor’s call, RIOC has instituted a hiring freeze, but its operating budget is otherwise unaffected.

Back to school. High vigilance at the crosswalks, please!

RIRA Column from page 3

choose to replace her with either Farance or Feeley-Nahem, it is just possible that our labors to honor the premise of “no taxation without representation” will be rewarded.

RIRA Elections

It’s hard to believe that two years have elapsed since I ran for and won an unprecedented third term as RIRA president. Time flies when you’re having fun. We have had a good group of delegates on the Common Council these past two years, able and willing to work for the good of the community. The realities of life have robbed the Council of several excellent Council Members over the months since the election, but the inroads of attrition are a concomitant of volunteer work.

RIRA has survived 31 tumultuous years serving Roosevelt Island. However, there are no guarantees that RIRA will be here to celebrate 32 years; it depends on you. It’s time to

time and energy available to each of us. Does this sound appealing? Give me a call **(212-935-7534)** if you would like more information.

One last note: I’ve had three terms, six years, in which to serve this community as your president as well as three years as a Common Council delegate. I haven’t loved every minute, but I wouldn’t trade a second of this experience. There have been successes and many failures, but I’ve done my best. This is my last term as RIRA president. It’s time for a new face, fresh ideas, and renewed energy. If you can make the commitment of time, have the necessary experience with organizations, and a good grasp of Island issues (and/or want to learn more), perhaps you should consider running for president or vice president. I will consider running to represent Westview in a few weeks, but that’s a decision I don’t need to make now. I hope you, too, will consider the options.

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Letters from page 2

Nahem and I are the two candidates who would be considered “activist” (as noted by the Governor’s vetting person), are candidates penalized for active advocacy on behalf of the residents? Advocacy on behalf of constituents is considered a good thing everywhere else, such as candidates for federal, state, and local governments, and candidates advocating on behalf of shareholders in public corporations. As one of the three candidates who received well over 50% of the vote (a mandate in any other election), many people told me they voted for me because I fought for things the community wanted. Should I not have complained about the broken RIOC Red Bus service last year? Should I not have complained about the lack of adequate emergency and evacuation planning for Roosevelt Island? Should I not have complained about RIOC’s Public Safety Department? If our advocacy/activism wasn’t a factor, then what were the factors? Clearly, both the Governor’s and Mayor’s offices *must* have criteria, because the candidates were not chosen according to numerical voting ranking. Roosevelt Island residents need an honest explanation.

It is worth asking: *Why are RIOC, the State, and the City unable to manage continuity for Roosevelt Island?* David Kraut was kept for continuity; possibly Patrick Stewart was kept for the same reason – both are rubber-stamp Board members, which is exactly why the Roosevelt Island community voted 92% on a referendum in favor of elected directors to the RIOC Board and against such appointments. Presumably, Mark Ponton and Michael Shinozaki were unwelcome for RIOC reappointment because they had the gall to provide independent thinking, such as identifying the Tramway upgrade as a \$25 million boondoggle, and asking about converting an abandoned parking lot into a park. Erin and I each have more corporate, executive, budgeting, planning, and management experience than the two reappointed Board members. RIOC’s explanation for retaining Board members for continuity (regardless of a 92% referendum and regard-

less of a strong nominee election of six candidates) would be seen as a gross management and executive failure in any public corporation and in any government: *Where else, regardless of the voters’ strong choices, do we retain existing directors, trustees, legislators, governors, and presidents?*

The Maple Tree Group did *excellent* work by creating and executing a very methodical and transparent election process. The Governor and the Mayor failed to heed the strong wishes of residents. It’s *taxation without representation* all over again, and quite literally, too.

Frank Farance

To the Editor:

On Monday morning, August 4, my daughter’s bike was stolen from the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery bike racks. We parked it and locked it around 8:30 a.m. and, by 10 a.m., it was gone. Perhaps I did not do a good job of locking it with the chain lock, as that was left behind, but what jerk steals bikes from little kids at a preschool? This wasn’t an expensive bike, a big bike, or even a glamorous bike. This was a pink and purple Barbie bike belonging to a little four-year-old girl. Her first bike, her bike with training wheels still on it. She loved that bike and is now very disappointed. How do I explain this to her? She knows stealing is wrong, and she’s only 4. I’m assuming whoever stole this bike is older, as it did have a lock on it, but maybe, just maybe, they too, need to go back to preschool and learn some golden rules.

Cari Bak

To the Editor:

I read with dismay about the Racquet Club’s “plan” to expand their Sports Center complex near the Tram. This proposal clearly would benefit Mr. Hartman and the owners of the Racquet Club and the numerous Manhattan residents willing to pay thousands of dollars for a membership in the club. The question is: will it benefit Island residents? The RIOC leasing fees will benefit us indirectly. But, as a new resident who

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has used the current swimming pool a number of times, I see that there is much that will be lost in the proposal, as well.

Currently, the discounted Club membership for Island residents is \$750 for an individual or \$1,150 for a couple, plus substantial hourly fees. Nonmembers pay exorbitant hourly fees. However, most of us would agree that indoor tennis/racquetball are luxury sports. It is a different story with regard to a swimming pool, which many Island residents do not have in their buildings. An indoor/outdoor pool would make the Club considerably more attractive to off-Island members, but very few Islanders would be willing to pay the fees levied by the Club. While it is true that the Westview indoor pool is available for an annual fee that is not onerous, it is expensive for those of us who do not use the pool regularly. Meanwhile, residents in the rest of the city have neighborhood pool facilities available at reasonable cost.

Therefore, RIOC should, as a condition of allowing further development, require that there be inexpensive resident access to any

pool facilities, and perhaps indoor gymnasium facilities without membership fees to substitute for the loss of access to the current facilities. In addition, the swim team, seniors, and other groups should have access during nonpeak hours for reasonable fees. While we will doubtless pay more (than the \$5 we pay now for the pool) for an improved facility, RIOC should make inexpensive access a priority for the benefit of the entire community.

Mickey Rindler

To the Editor:

I walked through the underpass between the 540/510 courtyard to where Blackwell playground used to be, and I noticed broken glass all over the area. On my way to work each day, I take the same path and on two subsequent days, the same broken glass was still there. What is RIOC doing? Kids still pass back and forth in this area going to the smaller playground or to the sprinklers and, if we are going to see this sort of lax cleanup, someone is going to get injured.

Steven Day

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